VISIONIAS GS 1

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Q1)

The Pala Empire were one of the major eastern empires in the early medieval period. They are known for their patronization of Buddhist art, culture and education.

Contributions of Palas Towards Art

1) Buddhist Art was extensively patronized

eg: Architectural feats like Odantapuri, Sompura, Nalanda universities

2) Creation of stupas under Pala patronage

3) Provision of security from the Tripartite struggle over Kanauj allowed culture to expand. Pala Empire was also well sheltered from western invasive forces.

4) Rulers were tolerant of diversity and educational expansion.

eg: Fa Xien and Hsuan Tsang visited Nalanda, contributing to Buddhist expansion.

5) Sculptural and mural experiments were given funding by Pala rulers

Thus, Pala Empire's relatively safe locality, rulers' patronage and tolerance combined with cultural freedom allowed art to develop, especially Buddhist art.

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Q2)

Adi Shankaracharya was a "low-caste" individual from southern India, credited with introducing the Bhakti movement.

{Reinvent Hinduism & Vedic Re-establishment}

- Introduced the concept of "Advaita" or monoism [non-dualism] that states that "brahman" and "atman" are the same & not separate.
- Denounced the caste system stating that all beings are equal in the eyes of god.
- Opposed ritualistic traditions and religious exclusion of "lower" castes.
- Opposed Brahmirical supremacy and monopoly over religious traditions.

- Opposed polytheism and called for devotion rather than ritualistic offerings.

- Called for gender equality removing the distinction of man and woman, as per vedic norms.

Thus, Hinduism's obscurantist practices of social ostracization and enforced socio-economic hierarchies were countered by Adi Shankaracharya which created the foundation for people like Ramanuja, Kabir Das, etc to contrive the Bhakti Movement.

Q3

One of the most impactful policy changes of British India was that ~~over the~~ of forest jurisdiction — one of multiple channels of India's drain of wealth.

Colonial forest policies driven By British Needs

1) forest policies aimed to commercialize lands to bring it under the market.
"Khuntkadi system → private property
[collective community land]

2) deforestation for railways development

3) Need for labour on lands for greater raw material export for Britain's industrial revolution

4) Energy needs as well as expansion of agriculture under various land settlements eg: Ryotwari, Permanent settlement, Mahalwari, etc.

No. Concern for Environment & Forests

1) Tribals were "peasantized" and "sedentarized", breaking down tribal culture and livelihood / moral economies, etc.

2) forced inclusion of tribals into agricultural labour burdened them economically, land alienation..

3) Extensive deforestation for → railways / → agricultural expansion.

4) Introduction of new forests system of plantations crushed biodiversity and introduced monoculture.

Thus, colonial forest policies were top-down, inconsiderate of tribal welfare and reflected a despotic approach to British-oriented developed that furthered exploitation of the masses.

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Q4)

Panchsheel principles are 5 foreign policy principles constructed by Pt. Nehru, defining friendly neighborhood whereas Non-Alignment is a policy of foreign independence and sovereignty in decision making.

Panchsheel
- → peaceful coexistence with neighbours
- → peaceful resolution of conflict
- → cooperation and reciprocation of goodwill [Gujral Doctrine]
- → Non-interference in internal matters.

Non-Alignment → India's foreign policy is independent and sovereign. It will not align to a specific world power and contribute bipolarity.

Maneuvering Cold War Era

1) Panchsheel ensured peaceful neighborhood and non-aggression despite China's alignment with Russia.

2) NAM allowed for independence in political relations and balanced growth.

eg: PL480 food security scheme was sourced from USA
defence and strategic needs were provided by USSR.

3) Ensured reduced hostilities and established India as an independent leader of the 3rd world nations

eg: India, Ghana, Yugoslavia, Indonesia led the NAM and encouraged independence in African nations eg 1960s Africa Year

4) Called for peaceful resolution of conflict

eg: North & South Korea case was mediated by India.

Thus Panchsheel and NAM gave India the direction to remain independent and call for peace. This continues to guide India's call for peace today in the midst of Russia-Ukraine crisis.

Q5.

National Unification was a trend seen in 19th century Europe, exemplified by the Italian unification as well as that of Germany.

Reasons for National Unification

1) Political reasons : Napoleonic wars had led to an upheaval of political stability in Europe.

As a result, the Congress of Vienna was called by Metternich to re-establish the monarchies of earlier times.

2) Economic Reasons : feudalistic society combined with growth of a middle class due to spread of industrial revolution was now demanding changes — fear of overthrow led to call for consolidation.

3) Socio-cultural changes : the Protestant revolution as well as rise of innovations led to a culture calling for reason, liberty, etc [Rousseau,] This furthered the need to "go back" to the old ways.

Germany:

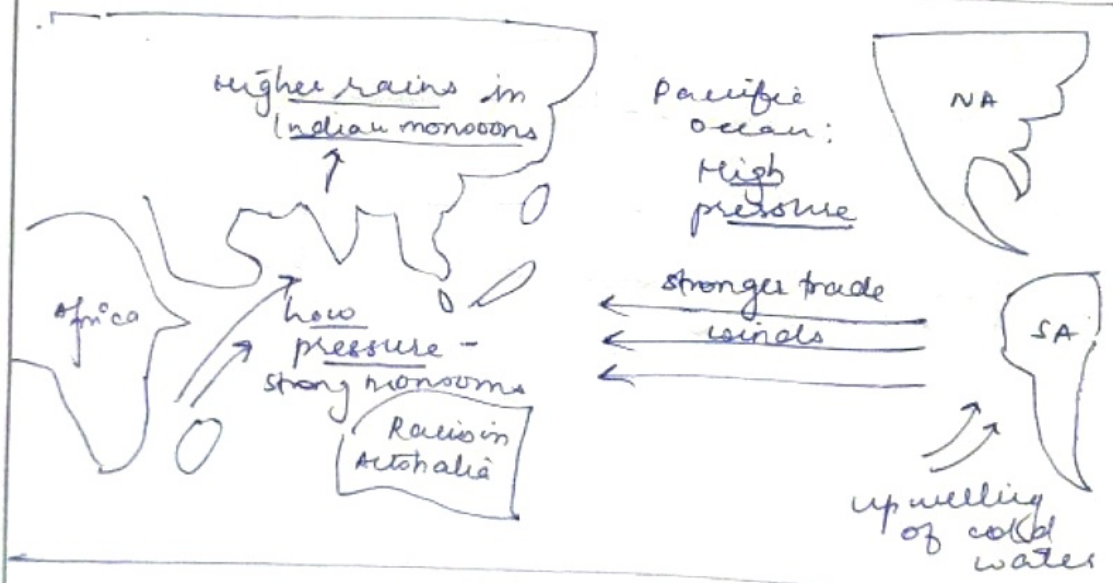
- Otto von Bismarck followed the "blood and iron" policy to consolidate the German empire through conquest.
- Hostility against the French led to speedy militarization and affirmative strengthening of troops.
- Colonial expansion and economic growth spurred national integration.

Thus, national integration was a political outcome and set the stage for the wars of the 20th century.

Q6.

Recently, a triple dip La Niña was observed by meteorological departments across the world. It refers to a situation where 3 La Niña phenomena happen in a row.

[Triple dip La Niña]



Triple Dip

Impact of La Niña

1) increased rains in India leading to floods + higher agricultural output, strong low pressure zone in Indian Ocean.

2) Higher rain in Australia, reduced drought conditions.

3) upwelling in coastal South America region (Peru, Chile) → growth of fish industry.

4) South east Asia - rains and stable economic output.

Triple dip La Niña thus has long run economic, social and environmental impacts throughout the world.

Q7.

Hydropower is the electricity or energy that is produced from the kinetic energy of moving water. These were called the "temples of modern India" by Jawaharlal Nehru.

(Hydropower): (Low C energy)

- Hydroelectricity (especially run of the river projects) do not make carbon byproduct or burning of fossil fuels

  eg: Rattle Hydroelectric project, Chenab river.

- Energy is renewable and non-polluting

- Low carbon is produced in construction of dam, storage and transmission of energy only.

However, despite low-C potential, its share in India's total energy generation is ≈ 15-20%.

Reasons for low share in Energy Generation

1. Dependency on coal which is cheap and low-technology base. 55% of total energy needs are met by coal.

2. Issue of displacement of tribals creates socio-cultural issues.
   eg: Narmada Andolan.

3. EIA acts as an impediment to quick construction.

4. Heavy investment and fiscal burden.

5. Shift to solar energy, nuclear energy.

6. Interstate disputes like Mekadatu and Indus water Treaty issue.

Thus, although hydropower is a strong transition source of energy, alternatives are more environmentally friendly and easier to implement.

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Q8.

Seismic Gap refers to a geological period of time in which no seismic movement / shift has taken place at a certain front or crustal boundary. It indicates a strong earthquake in the near future.

[Turkey: Seismic Gap]

1) Gaziantep was the epicentre of recent earthquake which took place at the Anatolian fault lines.

2) Despite steady movement, no minor earthquakes or tectonic shifts had taken place over a long time.

3) This represents a situation of increasing pressure and friction between plates. Whereas small inter-temporal earthquakes can ensure stability and adjustment, seismic gap is an indication of a large earthquake to come.

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4) Thus, the seismic gap could be a forecast for seismically vulnerable regions.

Reasons behind Severity of Earthquake
- → High velocity of P-waves, S-waves [intensity was near 6-7 on Richter scale].
- → Overcrowded cities of Gaziantep
- → weak infrastructure, not fit for earthquake resilience.
- → Inadequate awareness of earthquake adaptation

Thus, a combination of understanding earthquake forecasting using seismic gap knowledge along with infrastructural upgradation can ensure earthquake-readiness in Turkey and across the world.

Q9.

Recently, various legislations and cases have emerged regarding the institution of marriage in India.

eg: Raising age of marriage for women from 18 → 21, Navtej Singh Johar case decriminalizing homosexuality, etc.

Recent trends in marriages in India

- → Rise in same-sex marriage - LGBTQIA+ community
- → Rise in inter-caste, inter-religious marriage under special marriage Act
- → Rise in divorce rates
- → Love marriage over arranged marriage.

Legal Backing for Same-sex Marriage

1) This will reduce marginalization and ostracization of the LGBTQIA+ Community.

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2) ensure Right to Life and Personal Liberty (Article 21) as well as Right to Equality (Article 14) of all.

3) Give legitamacy and legal backing, scope for state protection to same-sex couples.

4) Call for international standards and modernity.

5) Ensure safety from violent orthodox elements of society.

Though marriage is a personal matter of private choice, India's society is still not fully ready to appreciate such a change. This makes it all the more essential to introduce legality for same-sex couples and it is yet to be seen how this provision will be addressed by the Uniform Civil Code under Article 44.

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Q10.

Today, the world is globalized and inter-connected through transport, the internet, the economy, etc. This has multifaceted impacts on mental health.

(factors affecting mental health in an inter-connected world)

1) Social media influence on body image.
eg: zero-figure aspirations, top models showing perfect skin/body type create stereotypes and pressure on youngsters to "fit in".

2) cyberbullying and harassment in the form of deepfakes, spreading rumours cause harm that is irreversible.

3) positive factors like support through social media campaigns like #MeToo and #BlackLivesMatter create positive bubbles

4) Intercommected world allows for inspiration, cultural connections and an expanding sense of identity as part of global village.

Challenges in achieving Sound Mental Healthcare

- cyberbullying is difficult to counteract at global scale.
- Identity theft and Right To be Forgotten are difficult to implement - usually ineffective.
- Mental health means of crime, online recruitment often takes place anonymously - difficult to track.
- Lack of awareness and stigma attached to mental health.
- Inadequate international legislation for the same [eg: Budapest Convention does not address mental health.]

Thus, mental health hygiene in the midst of globalization and inter-connectedness can ensure that the world gets connected to spread goodness, not evil.

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Q1.

Numismatics refers to the study of coins. India's numismatic history is rich and diverse and presents a picture of Indian evolution.

Major Numismatic stages of India

1) mahajanapadas (pre-Mauryan) used earliest form of coinage to replace barter system followed since Indus Valley Civilization.

2) Mauryan period: copper [basic metal] coinage which signalled an established system of weights and measures - commented upon in Arthashastra - depicting standardized and unified economic system

3) Post Mauryan coinage revealed diversity:

(i) Indo-Greeks created first gold coins and

first coins to be marked with the emperor's name.

(ii) Kushana coins had highest gold content signifying prosperity of the kingdom.

(iii) Silver coins under Shakas showed Rudradaman - Indianization of the rulers.

4) Gupta Coins : lower gold content, but highest number of coins, depictions of rulers and local deities.
eg: Samudra Gupta and Goddess Lakshmi

5) Medieval period : tankas (coins under Alauddin Khalji) followed by minting under Mughal empire.

~~Study of Coins helps Understand History~~

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(i) social and cultural norms

eg: Hindu Gods/goddesses in Gupta period shows Hinduism dominance.

Buddhist gods depict tolerant rulers.

(ii) Economic stability:

eg: gold coins for upper level transactions & copper coins for local transacti shows dichotomy and economic penetration.

(iii) Nasik coins show Shaka rulers being conquered by Satvahana rulers as one side is stamped by Shaka king, the other by Satvahana - This shows conquest and historical turmoil between kingdoms.

Thus, coins are a window into the past and can provide socio-economic and political conclusions to historians.

12.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar is known as the champion of Dalit Rights. However, his contribution also extends to Council politics, Drafting the Indian Constitution and revolutionizing education.

Ambedkar and Dalit Rights

1) Dr. Ambedkar was an outspoken critic of the Hindu Caste system due to his experiences as a child : social ostracization and discrimination.

2) He called for separate electorates for the "Depressed Classes".

3) Mahaparinirvana : the mass conversion to Buddhism and lowering of the Manucharitam in public.

However, his contributions went far beyond that:

1) Girls Education : Ambedkar believed every human has the right to be educated.

2) Drafting the Constitution and researching constitutions across the world (eg: South Africa, USSR, USA, UK, etc).

3) Debates in the Constituent Assembly regarding :
- national language (English)
- Role of Governor (balanced, neutral)
- Emergency provisions (dead letters of the Constitution)

4) Involvement ~~of~~ in the Round Table conferences to discuss future of India.

5) Despite Dalit rights championing, Ambedkar signed Poona Pact with Gandhiji, removing separate electorate demand

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f) Upliftment of the masses :

"political justice is only possible through social justice and economic justice."

Thus, B. R. Ambedkar called for an equal society with opportunities for all with a special emphasis on the "depressed classes".

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Q13.

The Civil Disobedience Movement was a response to the Simon Commission that arrived in India to decide India's political future but with zero Indian representation.

[Unique Character of Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM)]

1. Unlike the Non-Cooperation movement, this movement involved deliberate violation of unjust laws.
   eg: Salt Law, rent, etc.

2. It was founded upon an unconventional matter i.e. Salt, and used an unconventional method of satyagraha - unheard of across the world.

3 Unique in leadership and organization
→ the masses would respond to the leadership and call off protest when directed
→ an example of controlled mass movement.

Regional Spatial Patterns

1. Dharasana Salt March led by Sarojini Naidu

2. Khudai Khidmatgars or Red Shirts led by Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan in Jammu-Kashmir

3. K. Kelappan : salt march in Malabar region.

4. Vaikom Satyagraha in Tiruchapally led by E.V. Ramaswamy Naicker.

5. Assam Circular protests by students

6. Rani Muidinhui in Manipur led a revolt against local officers.

7. No rent campaigns led in U.P., Bihar, etc.

New mobilization Techniques

- Salt marches and manufacture of salt.
- Picketing of liquor shops
- Student protests
- Giving up of government accolades
- Military's refusal to fire at unarmed crowd (eg: Gahrwal rifles)
- Use of media, vernaculars, etc.

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Thus, Civil Disobedience movement of 1930-1934 was unique in its character, form and participation and represented a matured public and a politically charged mass of Indian citizens.

Q14.

Recently, cases of sinking islands in the Indian Ocean as well as regions of Lakshadweep and Andaman-Nicobar have raised concerns in the environmental and social spheres.

Causes of sinking of Islands

- Rising sea levels due to climate change (anthropogenic source)
- Increased outflow of rivers and expansion of deltas leading to submergence of coastal islands.
- Tectonic shifts leading to subsidence of plates creating sinking of Islands.

Implications of sinking Islands :

(i) loss of productive land that could be used for economic output and GDP growth.

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(ii) loss of shelter belts for safety from increasingly intense cyclones/ windshifts, etc.

(iii) Island communities are most vulnerable in this situation.

↳ Economic impact: Loss of land for agriculture or even living space.

↳ Social impact: over crowdedness, inability to expand (mismanagement of population), out migration in search of jobs, loss of culture and stability.

↳ Environmental impact: increased tidal impact may leave communities vulnerable to tsunamis/earthquakes/ cyclones → creating gender impact, etc.

↳ Inadequate means/awareness to reach out to government makes these communities further vulnerable to shocks.

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Thus, safeguarding island communities requires

- Nature based solutions (NBS)
- climate Justice and funding for adaptation from the Global North (as part of Paris Agreement and COP27)
- Island Community Rehabilitation through employment, social security and infra-structure development.

~~Any~~ Island states are often victims of climate change induced by the wrongs of others. Their safety is essential to ensure the continuity of their culture and livelihood.

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Q15.

Sustainable tourism is a concept of environmentally-conscious and eco-centric tourism that reduces human impact on local ecosystems.

Region Specific Constraints to Sustainable Tourism

(i) Himalayan Constraints

- Construction of roads, hotels, commercial areas for tourists is difficult due to vulnerable topography.
- Light pollution constraints reduce night-time tourism.
- Inadequate local awareness on local vulnerabilities create further impediment in safe tourism.
- Inadequate laws on pollution management lead to large tourist footprint in the region.

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② Western Ghats

- landslides and mudflows due to excessive construction make the region vulnerable, especially in monsoons
- Man-Animal conflicts and inadequate safeguards make sustainable tourism difficult.

③ North Eastern Region

- Need for a "pass" to enter North East states make a legal impediment in tourism in the region.
- Inadequate local awareness/ enthusiasm in capitalizing on eco-tourism.

④ Other areas.

eg: Sundarbans lack proper facilities for safe and sustainable tourism.

eg: government loopholes lead to over-investment and urbanization of tourist spots.

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Thus, a combination of legal, business and local challenges create a case of unsustainable tourism. There is a need to upgrade laws on ecology (like EPA '86, WPA, '72) and enhance local knowledge to make tourism in India sustainable.

Q6.

Soil plays an important role as "carrier of life" in any ecosystem and thus must be managed sustainably..

Role of soil in Ecosystem
- Regulates temperature for inhabitants
- holds macro and micro-nutrients like NPK, Sulphur, Zinc, etc
- provides habitat for detrivores eg: worms, mushrooms
- holds moisture
- holds roots of plants and provides habitat for growth
- essential stock in the carbon- and nitrogen cycle, etc.

Significance of Sustainable Soil Management

1) Ensures productive agriculture, efficient output with socio-economic returns to farmers

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2) Ensures reduced use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides, thereby creating scope for organic farming.

3) Better environmental outcomes

eg: reduced toxicity of soils
reduced runoff ⇒ eutrophication
healthy soils produce healthy plants.

4) Stronger resilience to cyclones/tsunamis

eg: better soil leads to better and faster growth of trees which holds soil together and reduces erosion.

5) preserve biodiversity and ecological balance.

However, sustainable soil management needs to be coupled with:

① organic farming / natural farming
② sustainable cropping patterns.
③ reforestation and National Green India Mission.

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Hence, soil management can ensure better ecological and economic outputs. As said by Sunderlal Bahuguna after all : " Ecology is the best economy."

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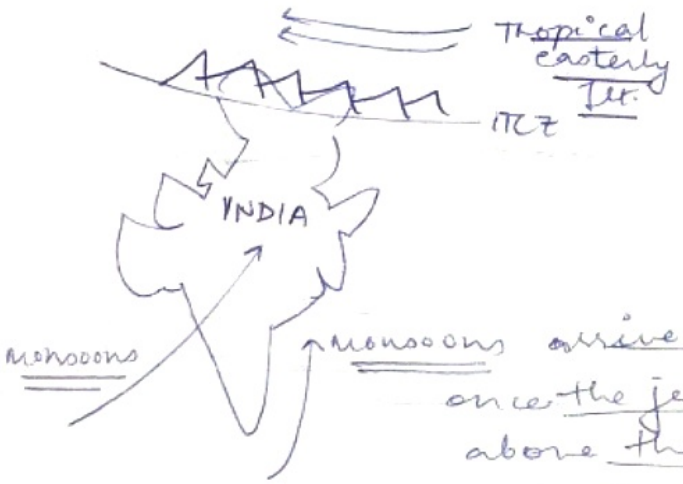
Q17.

Jet streams are fast moving masses of air that are both a result and a cause for weather & climate patterns across the world.

Jet streams and climate of India and world.

1. Tropical Easterly Jetstream defines the movement of Indian monsoons.



monsoons arrive strongly in India once the jet stream moves above the Himalayan region.

2. Subtropical westerly jet stream brings western disturbances to India in the winter → providing irrigation to Northwest states.

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(3.) El Niño and La Niña make the weakening and strengthening of jet streams which influence climate throughout the world.

eg: El Niño: weak equatorial winds
→ drought like conditions in India, Australia.

(4.) Polar jet streams determine movement of ocean currents and cause changes in climate over Europe.

eg: polar jet stream spread leads to colder conditions in Europe.

(5.) Jet streams ensure balance of winds and spread of high and low pressure zones.

eg: Jet streams in Atlantic region can also contribute to formation of bomb cyclones, hurricanes, etc.

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Thus, jet streams are an essential climatic mechanism that can affect the stability of macro-climate in India and the world. Their changing nature due to global warming must be studied to determine potential global impacts.

Page

Q18

Around 16% of total population in urban areas reside in slums. A common example of the same is mumbai.

Factors Responsible for Slum formation

- Unplanned urbanization and industrialization
- centripetal force of industrial growth.
- migration due to job inadequacy in rural areas
- facilities like education/healthcare attract more people
- Overcrowdedness and pollution.
- Bureaucratic apathy with regard to slum dwellers.
- Inadequate legislation leading to entrenched poverty and inequality.
- Inadequate implementation of policies.

As a result of these factors slums become common at the outskirts of cities.

Need to Re-vamp ISSR under PMAY(U)

1) Need for citizen-centric approach as per 2nd ARC - with grievance redressal mechanism.

2) Need for implementation oversight and long term management for sustainable housing.

3) Need for rehabilitation of slum dwellers rather than just top-down provision of housing.

4) Need for social security through employment like DUET scheme and Rajasthan's urban employment guarantee scheme for true upliftment.

5) Housing must be combined with water connection, electricity, fuel, etc to be substantial.

Thus, slum areas must be seen not as a problem to be eradicated but

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instead as a challenge that requires a holistic and human-centric approach to development and social upliftment.

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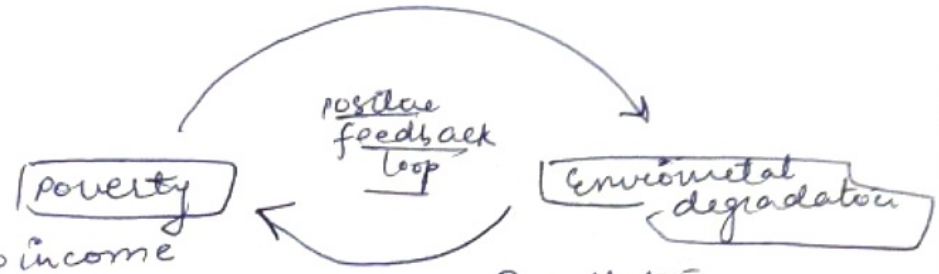
Q19.

Poverty and environmental degradation are interconnected in that one exacerbates the other.



- low income
- low resources
- dependence on fossil fuels (e.g. wood)
- sticking to chemical fertilizers / pesticides
- inadequate knowledge

- pollution
- soil erosion & degradation
- disease and death
- perpetuates backwardness in ecology and society.

How can Poverty Reduction Safeguard Environment?

1. Education of the people can enhance awareness of biorights and nature-based solutions.

2. Employment generation can reduce dependence on fossils and switch to cleaner fuels like LPG cylinders.

3. Financial inclusion & digital inclusion through JAM, etc can enhance insurance and encourage organic farming.

eg: PM FBY, PM FME.

4. Greater connectivity through internet (BharatNet) and infrastructure can enhance information sharing and delivery of ~~better~~ cleaner alternatives.

eg: PM KUSUM: development of solar-powered pumps.

5. Skilling can create scope for crop diversification (thereby reduce monocropping intensity) and introduce livestock farming: integrated farming techniques.

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A combination of education, inclusion, service delivery and skilling can thus create not just socio-economic outcomes but also environmental outcomes and help India aim for a Clean Economy by 2030, with mission LiFE at its centre.

Q20

Globalization and religion have formed an interesting nexus defined by both positive and negative attributes.

New Possibilities of Interaction

- Globalization has created a market for growth of religious propagation.
- expanding frontiers of cultural curiosity and amalgamation
  eg: Religious studies.
- global citizens are now participating in religious tourism
  eg: Buddhist Circuit
  Ram Circuit
- Use of social media and websites to enhance digital knowledge base for religion.
  eg: Buddha's treatises
- Increased research, development and interest in religion history, culture, evolution, etc.
  eg: Vedas / Puranas.

Thus, globalization has created goodwill through religious interaction & expression.

However, there have also been challenges:

① 9/11 attacks were an example of religious zeal using global tools to create a violent impact on the world.
Similarly Mumbai and Delhi attacks - Islamic radicalism.

② Using blockchain, cryptocurrency for money laundering purposes to fuel religious attacks.

③ Cross border crimes and nexus with drug dealing, sex slavery, organ trade, etc.

④ Online recruitment and spread of hate speech and seditious alarms

Thus, globalization has become both a pathway for religious integration and intercultural syncretism as well as a pathway for ideological warfare and orthodoxy.

It is up to the upcoming generations to ensure that the tools of globalization are used for global growth and not subjugation of one under another.

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Q1.

India's judiciary has often come under question regarding its opaque nature and lack of transparency.

Lacking judicial accountability

- → Collegium system follows opaque method of recruitment and appointment of judges.
- → Sealed cover jurisprudence
- → India's judicial appointments are isolated from executive/legislative roles.
- → Article 142 allows judiciary to take a step into executive jurisdiction to do "complete justice".

Need for New Law to Ensure Judicial Accountability

1. Judiciary is a pillar of democracy and justice needs to be "seen" to be done.
2. Collegium system has scope for favouritism, nepotism and bias.

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Q2.

③ Citizens have a right to information under RTI Act 2005 and since judiciary is government body, the same should apply to it.

Arguments Against Law of Judicial Accountability

→ Article 50 separates powers of executive & judiciary. This also struck down 99th Constitutional Amendment of NJAC.

→ Judicial autonomy needs to be conserved to ensure free and fair judicial ruling.

Thus, a fine balance needs to be secured between the doctrine of separation of powers and the need for checks and balances in an accountable democracy.

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Q2.

Since the inception of the Constitution, Fundamental rights (FRs) and Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP) have often been at loggerheads.

[Why the struggle between FR and DPSP]:

whereas DPSPs are promoters of state action, FRs are limits on state's actions. So they inevitably clash.

[Reconciling FRs and DPSPs]

1) Champakam Dorairajan Case and 1st constitutional Amendment Act.

9th Schedule vs. Article 31 (private property)
↓
Zamindari Abolition Act for socio-economic justice as per DPSP.

2) Shankari Prasad Case ~~made~~ gave parliament the power to amend FRs for purpose of DPSP implementation.

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3) Golaknath Case made the FR supreme and non-amendable. after 24th Constitutional Amendment Act resulted in Art 39(b) and (c) being "greater than" Articles 14 and 19.

4) Kesavanda Bharti Case established basic structure doctrine that ensured Parliament can change FRs but without harming the basic fundamentals of the constitution.

5) Minerva Mills Case established due process of law as a means of judicial review to ensure the doctrine of proportionality was followed in DPSP.

Thus, a fine balance between FRs and DPSPs was established over the years and continues to be maintained today.

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Q3.

The Prime Minister's Office is a body that holds all those individuals and organizations that are of high importance. It is effectively the first line of action stemming from the Prime Minister.

functions of PMO

- Top level discussions are done here.
- centralized decision making.
- Manages and controls various bodies like the Atomic Energy Commision
- Handles top-level security-related, space-related and cyber-related matter.

Role of PMO in shaping Policy Making

(1) positive Role

(2) enhances quick decision-making.

Page

- allows for centralized and undelayed response to emergency situations.
- no unnecessary delay due to long discussion process as in Parliament
- top-down action with immediate results.
- PM has a small body of close associates for discussion; removes arbitrariness.

(2) Negative Role

- Inadequate oversight / discussion
- May lead to despotic / dictatorial rule.
- Undermines representative and participative democracy
- Rash decision-making / Favouritism & bias.

PMO is thus a powerful decision making body that could prove to be a boon or a bane depending on its use.

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Q 4

Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) is the sedition clause that calls for punishment for anyone who incites violence against the state.

Need for Re-examination of Sec. 124A

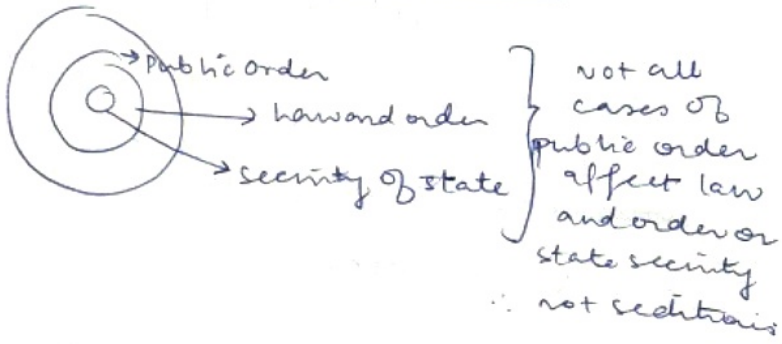
1. "Chilling Effect" of sedition law on Right of Expression (Article 19)
2. other nations have decriminalized it e.g. UK, USA, etc.
3. misuse of the law by political agents

Need for Balance between Civil Liberty and India's Sovereignty

1. Sedition law in itself is not a wrong because Article 19(2) provides for reasonable restriction on 19(1)(a) i.e. freedom of speech & expression.

2. According to Kedar Nath Singh Judgment, sedition as a law does not need to be removed. Instead it is the onus of the state to ensure that any act of strong speech against state is not interpreted as sedition.

3. Need to differentiate between :



Thus, Sedition law can continue - as per Law Commission report - but its use must be tempered by the Doctrine of Proportionality to ensure that civil liberties are not over-harmed for state sovereignty purposes.

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Q5.

Citizen participation is the involvement of people in governance mechanisms like e-governance to enhance social outcomes.

Citizen Participation in e-Governance

1. This could mean civil society engagement and contribution to data collection / registry of beneficiaries / service delivery.

2. It also involves grievance redressal through active feedback provision.

3. Using e-governance channels for service access, etc.

These methods can enhance success of e-governance initiatives in rural India.

1) participation in e-Gram swaraj can enhance role of Gram Panchayats and local governance.

2) One Nation one Ration Card, JAM trinity and online payment through creation of bank account can enhance scheme outcomes like

- Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT)
- PM KISAN
- PM POSHAN, ICDS, etc.

3) Grievance redressal through CPGRAMS and online RTI filing can ensure doorstep delivery of services and information.

4) SWAMITVA, supporting government in drone-based land monitoring can ensure propertied citizens.

5) Agricultural output enhancement using AI, drones can be improved through help of farmers.

Thus, e-governance becomes truly citizen-centric when people are directly involved - as per 2nd ARC.

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06.

Aspirational district Programe was introduced as a scheme to upgrade 123 districts across the nation in various socio-economic indicators like health, education, sanitation, etc.

Successes of Aspirational District Programme

- Provision of social infrastructure like school, hospital
- Improvement in various indicators like waste management, tap water connection
- focus on churn area development
- Cooperative and competetive federalism encouraged.
- Focus on cities along with AMRUT, Smart Cities Project, etc.

The programme gave an impetus to equitable and sustainable growth and encouraged the introduction of Aspirational Blocks Programme in 2023-24 budget.

Q7.

Some challenges persist:

(i) underperforming districts due to lack of oversight and lethargic bureaucracy

(ii) water management continues to be a challenge.
eg: Yamuna floods in Delhi;
Bangalore + Mumbai floods.

(iii) Pollution and waste continue to clog cities.

(iv) Inadequate integration with supply side eg: industry activity is at odds with the project.

There is a need to realign the concept of Aspirational District to a holistic and integrated approach of mission Lift [Lifestyle for Environment], for adequate outcomes.

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Q7.

Technology is the most recent and most useful tool of the 4th Industrial Revolution. It can be harnessed by NGOs to enhance their outcomes.

Role of Technology for NGO sector

1. use of social media to gain recruits, volunteers and spread their message

2. Use of social media campaigns to gather crowdfunding and other local resources and ensure stability.

3. use of blockchain technology for effective, leakage-free service delivery.

4. Using websites for feedback and grievance redressal.

5. Use of drone technology / AI / IoT to gather data / collate data to reach potential beneficiaries.

Q8.

6. Using technology to upgrade their product / interface.

7. Reach out to other NGOs for sharing of best practices through networking.

Simultaneously, technology can be misused for money laundering, exploitation of people, etc. This must be avoided.

Technology can prove to be a tool for rapid growth of the NGO sector towards efficient and effective service delivery in a citizen-centric model.

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Q8.

Foreign Educational institutions were introduced into the Indian education system by a notification by the University Grants Commission (UGC) recently. This move has advantages as well as some challenges.

Positive Implications

- Higher standards of Indian education (at international levels)
- Teacher training and sharing of pedagogical best practices eg: outcome-based evaluation.
- Cultural contact (people-to-people) through student exchange programs can enhance India's soft power diplomacy.
- technological and infrastructural upgradation of Indian Higher educational institutions
- Enhanced logistics and international interoperability with vocational education.

All these measures can make India a preferred destination for higher education in the near future.

Q5.

Challenges to entry of foreign Edu. Institutions

- Technological infancy at schools/colleges
- National Education policy (2020) still to be implemented
- Weak logistics and lacking infrastructure
- Weak teacher: student ratio and low enrollment into higher education (~30%)
- Inadequate teacher quality and backward practices like rote-learning
- Excessive focus on bilateral student exchange instead of overall multilateral approach.

Thus, though foreign university entry can help India democratize higher education, more needs to be done to ensure SDG 4 is truly achieved in spirit.

Q5.

Latin America refers to all nations in Central and South America like Brazil, Argentina, Chile as well as Dominican Republic, etc.

Relationship Between India and Latin America:

1) Trade is steadily increasing with this region as costs of shipment fall.

2) South-South Cooperation in contexts of:

- Cultural contact and soft power (G20).
- UNSC Permanent Membership: Brazil and India both vying for seat.
- climate justice and reparations from the global North
- Non Aligned Movement in context of Russia-Ukraine War.

Q10.

3) Energy and resources: Alternative for India:

① Lithium triangle i.e. Chile, Bolivia, Argentina.

② Oil, Venezuela

③ minerals and forest resources of Brazil can ensure energy security and carbon-neutrality by 2070.

4) Collaboration on disaster management as part of CDRI, etc.

5) Paradiplomacy (Uttar Pradesh and Brazil diplomacy) along with currency swap arrangements.

Thus, India's foreign policy now encompasses Latin America as a major partner in global matters of peace, power and politics.

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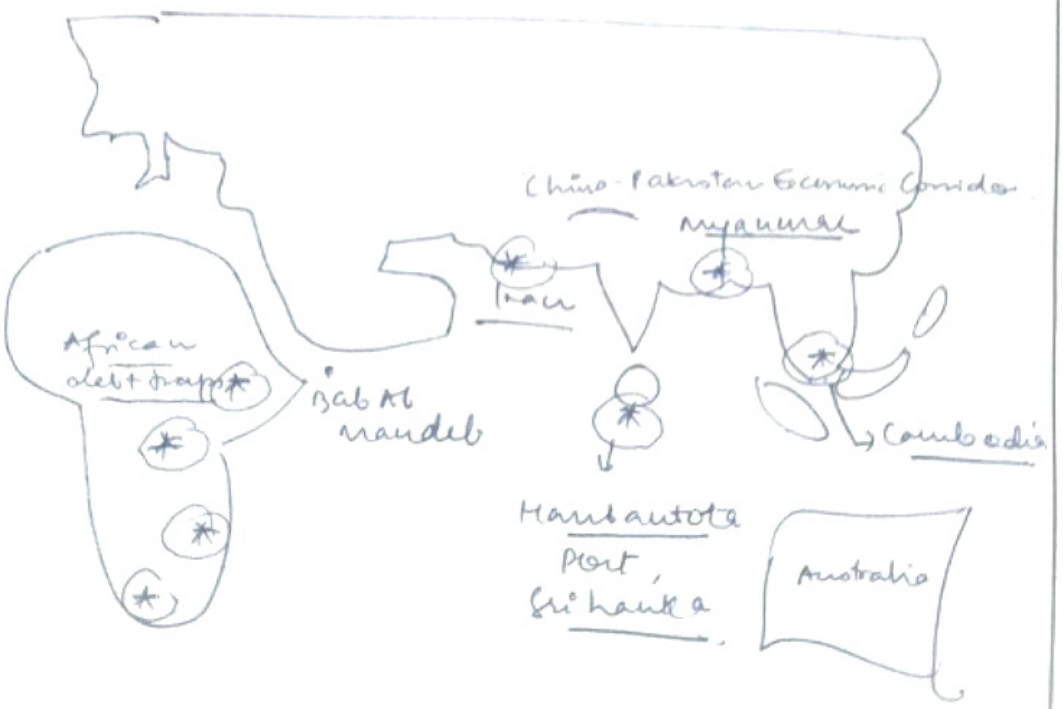
Q10.

Debt-trap diplomacy is a method by which a nation provides excessive loans to a developing country for funding its growth. This ends up making the country dependent and indebted to the original nation which can then exploit this upper hand.

China's Debt Trap Diplomacy (Regions)



China provides funds to underdeveloped nations. Then, in the name of repayment it gets the right to build ports / cities in those regions and establishes its presence. This creates economic, political and defense challenges for India.

Q1.

Impact on India's Interest

1. Greater militarization of Chinese ports in neighboring countries creates threat of attack. [security and growth]
2. String of Pearl / Nine Dash Line leads to surrounding of India from all sides. [defense challenge].
3. Dependence on China reduces India's economic and geopolitical leadership position in the Indo Pacific.

At the same time India's friendly diplomacy through soft loans acts as a contrast to China's warrior-like diplomacy and thereby attracts India's neighbours to India as a leader.

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Q1.

The Indian Constitution is the longest written Constitution of the world, created after cherrypicking and defining the best portions of Constitution across the world.

Amalgamation of Constitution
- Judiciary, parliament – UK
- Fundamental Rights – USA
- Fundamental Duties – USSR
- Liberty, equality, fraternity – France
- DPSP – Ireland / Spain
- Emergency – Germany
- Governor's Role: Government of India Act 1935 + Canada.

Despite being a product of so many Constitutions the Indian constitution imbibes:

① Social Justice : "Socialist republic"

- Preamble calls for equality of opportunity
- Article 14 (Right to Equality) ensures

Rule of Law → equal protection of law
→ equality before law.

- DPSP Article 38 and 39 ensure socio-economic equity and justice through welfare state.
- Fundamental Rights Articles 15(4) and 16(4) provide for reservation for social and educationally backward classes (SC and ST).
- Fundamental Duty (Article 51A) provides for respect for women.

② Pluralism

- Preamble states India is a "secular" country [Indian concept of secularism].
- Articles 25-28 provide for religious freedom
- Article 29-30 ensure cultural and educational rights and minority rights.
- Schedules 5 and 6 provide for ST and SC safeguards.
- Linguistic plurality through Schedule 8 - 22 official languages, no national language.

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(3) Equality

- Article 14 → Equal protection of law
  → equality before law
- substantive equality through reservation (even in promotions 16(5)) for EWS, backward classes etc.

Thus, the Constitution of India may be a combination of those across the world but it has been refurnished to fit the uniquely Indian context of unity in diversity.

Q1(a).

Recently, criminalization of marital rape was brought before the ~~Sou~~ court for providing a legal mechanism to safeguard human rights. However, concerns regarding the privacy of the marital institution were raised.

Need for criminalizing Marital Rape

1) Marital Rape is the most cruel of all forms of harassment because it is legitimized by the institution of marriage.

2) victim is under greater trauma because she must face the perpetrator of the crime daily and live with him.

3) women's rights and the call for UNDHR to apply, along with Istanbul convention.

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4) It is closely linked to domestic violence.

5) Spillover impact on children and mental wellbeing of the family.

Challenges in Criminalization of marital Rape:

1) misuse of the law by women for purpose of monetary benefit.

2) Burden of proof is difficult to establish

3) SC stated that the institution of marriage is considered sacred in India. This law may interfere with this fundamental institution.

4) Other mechanisms like divorce already exist.

5) Implementation challenge due to inadequate means of surveillance/investigation.

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6) Lack of political will to change the status.

Thus, various political, social and institutional challenges act as impediments to this step forward. The Uniform Civil Code under Article 44 can prove to be a change in this respect and help women ensure their dignity and choice as part of Article 21 and SDG 5.

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913.

Indian model of federalism is that of a "quasi-federal" state where there are both Centre and state constituents but the system is Centrally tilted.

Centralizing Tendencies of Indian Federalism :-

1) Constitution does not mention "federal" anywhere - indicating unitary tilt

2) Emergency powers put state legislature & executive in Parliament's hands
eg: Article 365, 356.

3) Governor's powers under Article 163 allowing reservation of bills for President's review, recommendation of Emergency (President's Rule).

4) Concurrent list (Schedule 7) subjects allow for Central law to override State law in case of clash.

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5) Union Territory provisions for direct control.

eg: New Delhi: National Capital Territory Governance ordinance

Contestation between Lieutenant Governor and elected MLAs in matter of appointment of civil servants

respite these tendencies, there is also adequate space and autonomy given to states.

Federal features

1) State list under Schedule 7 for state jurisdiction.

2) State Election Commission conducts state's local elections autonomously.

3) Spending and revenue under state Finance Commission.

4) Principle of Harmonious Construction provides for a favourable reading of clashing laws that combines both Centre & State laws to make them work constructively.

5) Principle of subsidiarity calls for autonomy and self-governance as far as possible.

6) Cooperative federalism and various bodies like Zonal Councils, Interstate Council (Article 263), etc.

Thus, unitary features are not an impediment to federalism in India. They are a mechanism to ensure unity of the holding-together federation. Commissions like Punchhi, Sarkaria and ARC can enhance India's federal nature through recommendations of collaboration and healthy competition.

Q14.

Recently, the Supreme Court recommended a new ~~form~~ method of electing the Chief Election Commissioner and ECs.

Collegium for appointment of CEC/EC:

1) Prime Minister
2) Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha
3) Chief Justice of India

Fundamental change:

- Brings objectivity to body nominating the CEC/EC.
- creates transparency in process.
- introduces element of legislature, executive and judiciary combined.

This judgement has far reaching implication for ECI, and elections in India.

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1. Reduced bias in nomination.

2. Balanced mechanism of recomudation can reduce favouritism / nepotism

3. Sets the stage for clarifying the merit on which CEC / EC is recomended

4. Reduces opportunity for favours (by CEC) and therefore encourages
   - impartiality
   - independence and autonomy
   - absence of bias in working of ECI.

5. Ensures reduced bias even in Delimitation procedure (under Article 82)

6. Promotes fair elections and freedom from political interference.

Appointments are just one step towards reforming the ECI. There is a need for:

- defining CEC/EC requirements / qualifications
- permitting ~~parallel en~~ lateral entry
- defining tenure and preventing re-recruitment to ensure independence of the body.

This step is an essential one towards free and fair elections and can have long-lasting impacts on India's electoral institution.

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Q15.

Globalization has opened up both opportunities as well as challenges for civil services. Reforms and affirmative action can help reach conclusions and solutions for the same.

Challenges of Opening-Up and Global Integration on Civil Service

- Rising standards of service delivery [international comparison].
- Increased penetration of internet, fake news
- Demand for welfarism along the lines of developed nations like USA, etc. eg: free healthcare
- Cybersecurity challenge through use of e-governance
- Information overload and confusion regarding best practices. [some practices are not applicable everywhere - one size fits all approach].

5)

Need for Holistic Reforms for Efficient Service Delivery :-

1) There is a need to understand that "one size fits all" approach is wrong. Developed and developing nations have different systems.

2) Learning from similar nations :-
eg: Brazil's Healthcare system of universal coverage.
eg: Italy's universal social security

3) Adoption of new age technology for beneficiary Identification & efficient delivery eg: use of blockchain technology.

4) Need to counteract fake news by using social media to spread correct news and raise awareness.

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5) Use of citizen's charter, grievance redressal forums for feedback-based growth.

Civil Service must strive to change with the times through programes like Karmayogi to ensure citizen centric governance as per 2nd ARC.

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Q/6

recently, India's leadership of the G20 has released a Declaration that calls for better use of digital public infrastructure for governance.

Role of Open Data in e-Governance in India

1). Interoperability of ministries, Departments in scheme implementation.

2) Collation of data to find and map most vulnerable localities and hence enhance service delivery.

3) Reduce corruption & leakage through proactive display of data to the public.

4) Enhance trust and mutual cooperation [Government to people relations] for better outcomes.

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5) weeding out of ghost beneficiaries.

6) better investigation of leakages/siphoning of funds can cure administrative lethargy.

7) Right to Information of citizens is ensured
↳ key to good governance as per 2nd ARC.

Challenges to Ensuring Quality & Reliability

- → issue of cyberthreat / cybersecurity
- → digital dichotomy resulting in exclusion of people from the system.
- → Inadequate protection of critical digital infrastructure can lead to misuse.
- → Data localization clause continues to be unclear under Digital Personal Data Protection Bill → misuse through commercial means.
- → Data terrorism can hurt individual's right to privacy (under Article 21).
- → Political use for vote bank politics.

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Thus, open data may be a futuristic measure for enhanced governance but safeguards are not yet in place to ensure high quality, usable data. The current aim should be equitable digitization and sustainable cyber growth.

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Q17.

Zero food children are those that receive very low nutrition as a direct result of malnourished mothers that are unable to sustain 2 bodies.

Zero food children - implications

- Result of anaemic women (1 out of 2 women in India), child marriage and inadequate menstrual hygiene.
- stunting of children (30%)
- wasting of children (low weight).
- Hidden hunger due to lack of nutritional food
- India's HDI : # 132 in 2022.

To reduce this phenomena, maternal health needs to be a priority.

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1) POSHAN Abhiyaan : National Nutrition Mission aims to provide nutrition to adolescent girls and lactating women.

2) Aanganwadi and ~~AAS~~ ASHA workers provide maternal health services to rural women.

3) Integrated Child Development Scheme [ICDS] and Matru Vandana Yojana for new mothers to provide a mother-child oriented solution to nutrition deficiency.

4) Biofortification through biotechnology, millets production (Shree Anna Yojana) to enhance nutritional intake of women.

5) Budget 2023-24 : National mission to Eradicate Anaemia by 2047.
→ Allow women to produce more milk.

6) Awareness generation through telemedicine
eg: e-Sanjeevni.

7) Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan for sanitation and neonatal health

8) Legal changes → longer maternity leave, etc.

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Thus, a coordinated approach to "women-centric" nutrition delivery can ensure not just the health of women but also that of children and thereby address the issue of nutritional insecurity.

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Q8.

Rare diseases are those that occur very rarely or amongst a significantly low number of people in the population. These include certain forms of cancer and various old-age diseases.

Concerns Related to ~~Old age~~ Rare Diseases in India

- Inadequate knowledge/awareness. These diseases often go unidentified, undiagnosed
- often require tertiary medical treatment which is high cost.
- infrastructure is lacking in rare disease treatment
- Vulnerability of these populations increases, as does out of pocket expenditure.
- No legal definition and low attention grients rare diseases.

[preoccupation with dengue, malaria, etc].

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Resolution of these issues

- Legal definition of rare disease.
- Research and development in rare diseases can be enhanced under ICMR.
- Government incentive or subsidy to create domestic medical units to deal with these diseases.
- Generating awareness regarding rare diseases via NGOs, civil society, etc.
- International collaboration and support from WHO to ensure facilities for rare disease ~~unit~~ treatment.
- Reduction of costs like recent removal of customs duties.
- Setting up pharmaceutical units for production of drugs in rare diseases thereby adding to economic output while tackling public health.

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Thus, a combination of RtP, political backing and medical proactiveness can ensure the Right to Health for this section of population suffering from rare diseases.

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Q19.

The Indo-Pacific Region refers to the countries of the Indian & Pacific Oceans. With USA's 'pivot to Asia' and a rise in aggression by China, the region has become a centre of conflicting stakes.

Underlying Intentions of Various Nations.

1. India has a clear cut intention of becoming the Asian leader of the Indo-pacific region with an aim of South-South Cooperation and a rules-based international order.

2. China's intention is multifaceted:

- Belt and Road Initiative aims to expand China's historical silk route in both land & maritime domain.

- Nine Dash line and Debt Trap diplomacy shows a warrior-work stance of territorial expansion

- Aggression and rapid establishment of the String of Pearls represents an intention to surround India and gain an upper hand in strategic terms.

3. South East Asian Nations intend to ~~vig for~~ establish peaceful relations and demand their sovereign right to territories in South China Sea.
   eg: Spratley Islands, Paracel Islands.

4. USA's intention is to restrict growth of China through Indo Pacific Economic framework and Build Back Better as well as Blue Dot Network.

With these intentions understood, collaboration can be ensured in a realistic manner.

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(i) India - USA - South Asia axis can ensure a policy of collaborative trade and counter China's dominance in the region.

(ii) Collaboration on counter terrorism, climate change [climate justice for small island developing states], sea of communication lanes and rules-based Indo-Pacific can be established.

(iii) Security & Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR) and Blue Economy goals can be stepped forward.

Thus, realpolitik and underlying underlying interests is essential for meaningful diplomacy and actual collaboration in foreign affairs to ensure goal of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam.

Recently, project Parvatmala and Purvodaya were introduced to expand infrastructure and development in North East India. However, various internal & external challenges pose a threat to this development.

Internal Challenges

- Ethnic tensions
  eg: Manipur crisis of Meitei, Kuki tribes.
- Secessionist tendencies
  eg: Bodoland, Naga insurgency
- Civil strife against AFSPA
  eg: Irom Sharmila hunger strike.
- Environmental degradation and land erosion.

External challenges

- Migratory crisis from Bangladeshi immigrants
- Land alienation due to immigrants
- Drugs nexus at borders due to Golden Triangle
- Citizenship concerns in the region.

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Need to Address Both :

Internal challenge

- Effective policing and developmental role.
- poverty alleviation
- infrastructure development
- social infrastructure, like education & health.
- Land rights through implementation of PESA, Forest Rights Act
- North Eastern Council meetings to resolve ethnic tensions.

External challenge

- Border security as per recommendations of Malimath Committee
  eg: CIBMS.
- Countering the menace of organ trade / illegal migration / drug trade through investigation agencies.
- Collaboration with neighboring governments to resolve cross-border crises.

These changes are essential before connectivity is achieved in the region.

However, North East India still serves as a connecting space between ~~to~~ India and its neighbours:

① Bangladesh - Bhutan India - Nepal connectivity. [BBIN]

② Kaladan Multimodal Connectivity Project.

Thus, connectivity can actually help resolve issues of internal and external crisis through economic growth & upliftment of the masses as well as intercultural contacts across nations, though simultaneous work on both is required.